

Frontier Dynamics: Cross-Cutting Ties, Conflict and Contestation on Agricultural and Conservation Hinterlands of Lake Naivasha

Marie Müller-Koné and Eric M. Kioko

1 Introduction¹

The agro-industrial nerve centre of Lake Naivasha in Kenya's Rift Valley has profoundly influenced some of its hinterlands over time (see Harper and Styles, this volume). This chapter focuses on the transformation of the hinterlands of the lake basin bordering Narok County, namely the Enoosupukia and Maiella settlements, which are hidden from the view of Lake Naivasha, hidden from the horticulture, geothermal and tourist developments along the shore of the lake (see Figure 11.1). These hinterlands have been transformed mainly through investment in market-oriented agriculture, starting with pyrethrum production by European settlers in Maiella in the early twentieth century. Agricultural intensification, particularly market-oriented food production, is believed to have picked up rather profoundly from the mid-twentieth century in these settlements supplying food produce to the fast-growing population of flower farm workers and the general population in and around the nerve centre.

We refer to Enoosupukia and Maiella settlements as frontier zones, which are perceived as “empty spaces”, although used mainly as hunting grounds and dry-season grazing areas by Maa-speaking groups from the eighteenth century and yet later transformed through agricultural entrepreneurship by individuals and groups from outside the area. The process of transformation of these rural frontiers of Enoosupukia and Maiella is largely linked to demographic and economic changes at the nerve centre. The process is also characterised by struggles over control and use of land between foraging, cattle husbandry, and farming involving “il Torobo” (Dorobo), Maasai and Kikuyu groups respectively, but also the by the nurturing of mutually beneficial ties and networks across social groups. Scientific investigation of the process of transformation of the frontier has mainly focused on the characteristic social and political conflict in

¹ First submission date: February 24, 2021. Acceptance date: March 13, 2023.



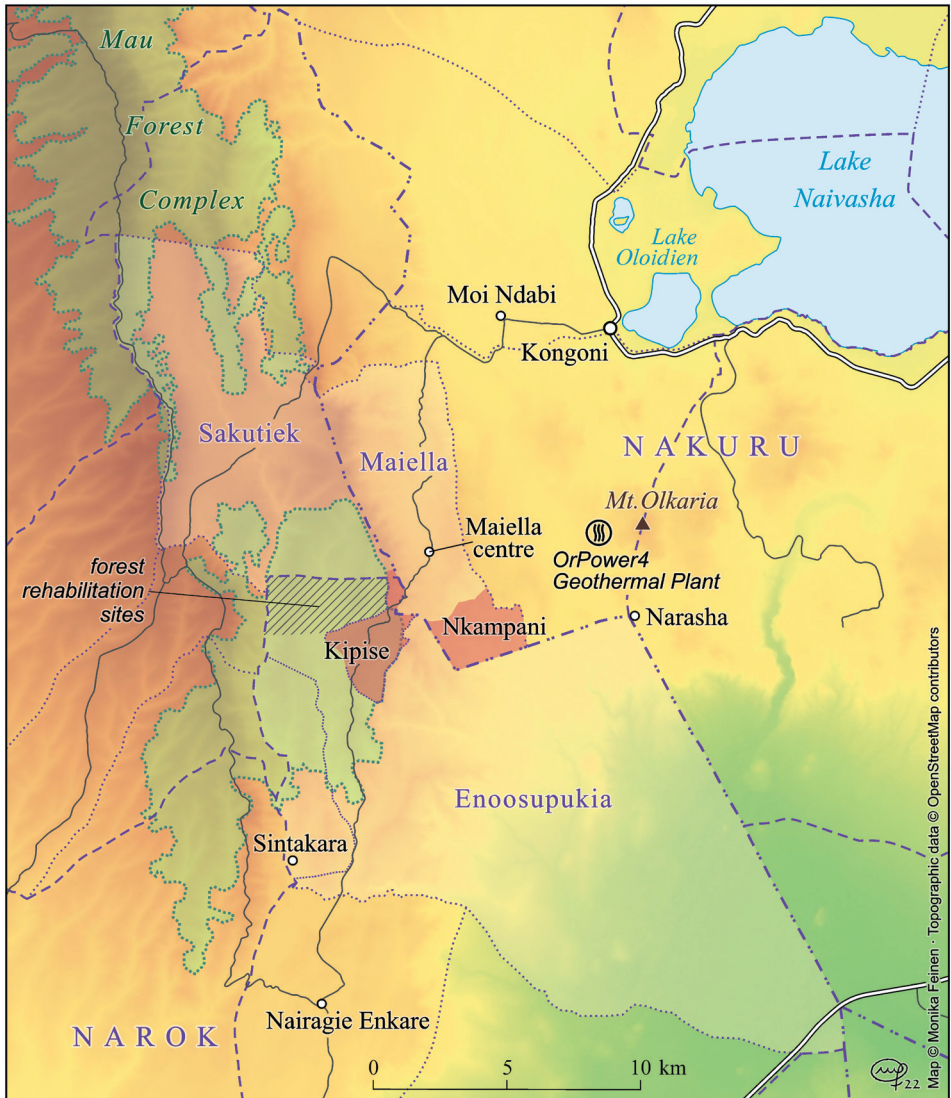
FIGURE 11.1 View of greenhouses and geothermal plants in Naivasha from Maiella
PHOTO: MARIE MÜLLER-KONÉ 2018

the 1990s (Klopp 2001; Matter, 2004; Hornsby 2012). Patterns of intercommunal cooperation and cross-cutting ties as well as new dynamics of land claims have received less scientific attention. This chapter pays closer attention to these developments of the twenty-first century and their role in shaping the Naivasha nerve centre.

Specifically, we examine the ways in which frontier dynamics – the development of an agricultural frontier and a recent history of violence and eviction – play out in present inter- and intracommunal relations on the outskirts of the nerve centre. We understand frontiers as “unruly” places that are structurally marginalised, in need of development in the eyes of developers, yet endowed with an abundance of resources – in the present case, fertile land – to be exploited (Geiger 2008; Schmitt 1997, 62; Tsing 2003). We hypothesise that such frontier situations emerge at the fringes of such nerve centres as the hyper-globalised Naivasha floriculture complex.

Foraging livelihoods, pastoralism and, later, farming, have historically characterised Enoosupukia and Maiella. Apart from issues of livelihoods, resource access and spatial competition and negotiation, the frontier also becomes an ethnic and minority battleground where specific groups negotiate and protect their interests using autochthony and marginalisation discourses (e.g. Scott 2004; Waller, this volume). Contestations, negotiations, disputes, and conflicts form part of the social order. As with most frontier zones, the influence of people from outside the area is substantial, and is a contributing factor in conflict.

The settlements of Enoosupukia and Maiella are situated roughly 12 km from Kongoni in the south lake area (see Map 11.1 and Figure 11.1). The hilly landscape of Enoosupukia, situated on the higher escarpments of the south-eastern fringes of the Mau Forest Complex, features a majority of pastoralist Maa speakers (different sections of the Maasai group – Purko, Keekonyokie,



MAP 11.1 The Maiella/Enoosopukia area
 CARTOGRAPHER: M. FEINEN

and Damat²) and Dorobo,³ former hunter-gatherers who progressively adopted the Maasai culture and language (see Cronk 2004). Enoosupukia used to be a forest and hunting ground for the Enoosupukia Dorobo, who claim autochthony in that place (Blackburn 1982; Matter 2010; see the landscape in Enoosupukia in Figure 11.2). By contrast, Maiella, situated closer to Lake Naivasha on the way up to Enoosupukia, is predominantly a Kikuyu-speaking settlement and a former colonial settler estate. It was directly integrated into the settler frontier that developed around Lake Naivasha around the turn of the twentieth century (cf. Kuiper 2017; Waller, this volume). The settlers attracted Kikuyu from Central Kenya, who were in need of land, as squatters on their farms. Yet even earlier, the Maasai from Laikipia had arrived in the Enoosupukia area with their Kikuyu friends and relatives, who henceforth drew more Kikuyu from Central Kenya. The Maasai, who controlled the Rift Valley around Naivasha in pre-colonial times, claim to have ancestral ties to the Maiella area (Hughes 2006; Lawren 1968; Muriuki 1974; Tignor 1976; Berntsen 1976; Galaty 1993b, 187–190; Spear and Waller 1993).

While the history of conflict and cooperation at the Enoosupukia-Maiella frontier stretches back into the nineteenth century, we provide an overview of how the agricultural frontier evolved in the course of the twentieth century to then analyse how its impact is felt in the twenty-first century, specifically during the period from 1990 onwards, looking at interethnic social, economic and spatial contestations and cooperation. We will do so by drawing on ethnographic data collected in Maiella and Enoosupukia between 2013 and 2014 (by the second author), and between 2018 and 2020 (by the first author). Data from the first period of research combined survey data, qualitative interviews and participant observation, whereas the data from the second period of research encompassed qualitative interviews and observations. Both were supplemented by archival data.

Our research shows two competing findings: (1) that groups continue to establish cross-cutting ties across ethnic divides, and that the will to overcome divides is there, visible also in the fact that no large-scale intercommunal confrontations have taken place since the 1990s. The peaceful conditions

2 See Richard Waller's description of these groups in this volume.

3 Dorobo (Il Torobo) is a derogatory term used by Maasai to refer to their foraging neighbours. Many Dorobo nowadays refer to themselves as Ogiek, which is their own denomination. Usually, the people who call themselves Ogiek speak Kalenjin as their first language and live close to Kalenjin groups in the area of the Mau forest complex (Blackburn 1982). The Dorobo in Narok (like those in northern Kenya), who have lived in proximity to Maasai groups, however, speak Maa rather than Kalenjin, and often still refer to themselves as Dorobo – in our case, the Enoosupukia Dorobo – which is why we use the term Dorobo throughout the text.

that are formed around cross-cutting ties and non-violent conflict resolution are necessary for the continued supply of food produce to the Naivasha nerve centre and related market exchanges between there and the frontier zones. (2) Elements of the past violence are still present in ongoing efforts by displaced Kikuyu and Maa-speaking groups to recuperate lost land in Enoosupukia they still feel entitled to, and can be seen to potentially impact future imaginations of residents of Maiella and Enoosupukia. Specifically, the role of some state individuals and institutions in the land claims creates legal uncertainties and confusion by seemingly appearing to support some claims against others depending on the ethnicities of the local claimants. We argue that these contestations and power struggles are shaped by the growing demand for farmland in the frontier zones due to the increasing demand for food produce at the agro-industrial nerve centre.

The chapter is structured as follows: first, we briefly discuss frontier theory and then describe the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history of territorial occupation of and relationships in Maiella and Enoosupukia. Thereafter we describe how this history of conflict and cooperation manifests in present-day life and how it shapes future relationships between local groups (Maa-speakers and Kikuyu), state actors (lands office in Narok and key elite), and the nerve centre (Lake Naivasha area). The conclusion revisits the theory with a discussion on how contemporary precarious relationships between and within frontier communities are affected by and affect the future of the wider Naivasha basin.

2 Violence and Cross-Cutting Ties at Resource Frontiers

Frontiers are spaces of opportunity – for land appropriation, for resource exploitation, and for new economic ventures (Imamura 2015, 69). The concept of a resource frontier entails the notion that some kind of “free land” exists to be occupied, and this land is typically located on commons or state-claimed lands. This “unused nature” is both an ideological and a physical condition (Hall 2013; Korf, Hagmann, and Doevenspeck 2013; Kröger and Nygren 2020, 376; Nelson 2011). The notion of empty space is also associated with an “ideological project of civilizing the not yet civilised or reputedly ‘barbarian’ populations inhabiting such contested regions” (Korf, Hagmann, and Doevenspeck 2013, 10), as the original, highly problematic use of the notion of frontiers by Frederick Jackson Turner (1893) indicates. The term “frontier” enshrines the teleological belief of a linear forward progression from a known, ordered, territorialised space into an unknown, empty space, which has to be incorporated

into the former (Schetter and Müller-Koné 2020, 2021). The frontier thus denotes a situation of rigorous change: "... a zone of not yet – not yet mapped, 'not yet' regulated" (Tsing 2003, 5100). Consequently, frontiers are often spaces of social dispossession and of violence (Geiger 2008).

The area under study here lends itself to the frontier perspective. The British colonial office saw the Lake Naivasha area and its surroundings as "empty" of "natural African tenants" (Kuiper 2017, 56) despite its occupation by pastoralists and hunter-gatherer groups (see Section 11.3). The British territorialised this frontier space through the railway (see Waller, this volume), settler farms and ranches that developed over the first decades of the twentieth century (cf. Kuiper 2017, 56–59). The lake basin and its closer surroundings were integrated into the "White Highlands", developing into a territorialised space and eventually a hyper-globalised floricultural complex – a nerve centre that continues to draw surrounding frontier spaces into its reach. The area of research at the borderlands between Lake Naivasha and Narok County, the former southern reserve, epitomises the progressive incorporation of frontier spaces into imagined "ordered" territory as mentioned above (see view from frontier space onto nerve centre Naivasha in Figure 11.1).

The physical changes in the landscape initiated by turning nature into a resource are forest degradation, forest fragmentation, transformations in land use and changes in land cover. The "discovery" of resources can take many forms: the clearing of forests and cultivation, ranching (Baretta and Markoff 1978), logging (Tsing 2003), or mineral extraction (Werthmann and Grätz 2012); even scenery can become a resource through strategies of conservation (Rasmussen and Lund 2018, 388; Guyot 2011; Harper and Styles, this volume). Unlike the cases in Latin America, Asia and some parts of Africa where the state initiated or encouraged agricultural settlement in minority regions in the second half of the twentieth century (Geiger 2008), the frontier that developed in Enosupukia from the mid-1900s emerged through occupation by agricultural entrepreneurs who hired local labour (known popularly as squatters) in forested areas that are far removed from control by the state apparatus, as discussed in the next section.

Frontiers like Enosupukia are "contact zones" where different social orders interact. Following changing land use and socioecological transformation, they tend to be marked by violent contestations (Geiger 2008; Hoefle 2006; Korf, Hagmann, and Doeveyspeck 2013; Rasmussen and Lund 2018; Reid 2011). Endeavours to turn nature into exploitable economic resources generate conflicts, not only about the question of direct access to the valued resources, but also over the definition of what constitutes a resource in the first place, and over the way in which resources are to be exploited (Hall 2013; Schmink

and Wood 1992). Where land access and use rights are contested, notions of autochthony may arise in the effort to protect claims (Larsen 2015; Little 2001; Radcliffe 2019), although some sections among local inhabitants also become part of the frontier dynamics, and sometimes even initiate frontier processes of capitalist transformation (see Li 2014, on indigenous frontiers). It is therefore important to underline that frontiers and ethnic territories are “created by diverse subjects engaged in situated struggles over categories, recognition and boundaries” (Hoffmann and Anthias 2020, 2).

Being spaces of contact, frontiers may also encourage the formation of ties and networks across social groups. For the studied areas, such cross-cutting ties have the potential to develop into conflicting loyalties (Kioko 2016). The theory of cross-cutting-ties/conflicting loyalties argues that cross-cutting ties between communities lead to conflicting loyalties with a number of actors; these actors in turn will attempt to prevent violence between communities (e.g. Colson 1953; Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1950).⁴ Intermarriages and negotiations over access to land are thus part of a web of social-economic relations that holds residents of an area together through practices, even if the discursive positionings may be more confrontational.

The nerve centre at Naivasha has historically influenced the frontier spaces on the margins, which, in turn, develop and transform through processes of contact, conflict and cooperation, all of which feed back to the nerve centre.

3 Shifting Inter- and Intra-Group Relationships: Conflict, Coexistence, and the Shaping of an Agricultural Frontier

This section provides a brief historical overview of intergroup relations in the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial eras. It discusses the development of the concomitant evolution of the agricultural frontier in Maiella and Enoosupukia and the violent confrontations that ensued, including the eviction of residents on both sides of the conflict. We will highlight the governmental interventions on the frontier, namely the transformation of customary into private, statutory land tenure (through land-adjudication areas) and the declaration of protected areas.

4 However, in some instances, cross-cutting ties may even escalate conflicts (Schlee 1997), because ties may easily become fragile, collapse and/or break down, thus explaining conflict (e.g. Fukui 1994). Still, actors have the capacity to reorganise, strengthen and/or form new alliances or try to sustain existing ones (Kioko 2016, 39).

3.1 *History of Inter-Group Relations in the Narok-Naivasha Borderlands*

Interdependent relationships between Maa-speaking groups (including Dorobo hunter-gatherers) and their neighbours, particularly Kikuyu farmers, have existed prior to their contact with Europeans. The relationships can be described in terms of three aspects: (1) social-cultural: intermarriage, adoption, and ceremonies such as initiation; (2) economic ties: trade, patron-client services, and cooperative resource use; and (3) political networks: military alliances against common enemies, and anti-colonial campaigns (see Lawren 1968; Muriuki 1974; Tignor 1976; Berntsen 1976; Galaty 1993b, 187–90; Spear and Waller 1993; Blackburn 1996).

Dundas (1908, 136–37) notes the possibility that the Dorobo, Kikuyu, and Maasai share a common ancestral tribe called the Endigiri, and that their ancestors came from beyond Mount Kenya. The Kikuyu claimed descent from the Shagishu and Ngembe groups, which are believed to have originally been Dorobo, and Karuru' (Dundas 1908, 136–37). The Kikuyu expanded southwards from Central Kenya in precolonial times, and when they crossed the Chania River, probably around 1700, they entered territory that was occupied by the Dorobo hunter-gatherers. Through mutual adoption ceremonies, they bought land individually from the Dorobo and integrated those tracts of land into their clan land over time. The Kikuyu had reached the edges of Maasai territory near the Ngong Hills when the first Europeans entered the area in 1887 (Leakey [1977] 2007).

The Maasai initially saw neither the Dorobo nor the Kikuyu as a threat. The Maasai adopted Kikuyu into their families (Waller 1993) and allowed them to clear some forests for gardens (Blackburn 1982, 295). The Dorobo had a more symbiotic relationship with the Maasai, which was based on mutual interdependence. The Maasai depended on the honey that Dorobo collected for honey beer, and relied on them as circumcisers for initiation ceremonies (Blackburn 1982; Kenny 1981). The list of items the Dorobo traded with Maasai is very long, and in excess of their respective needs (Blackburn 1982, 299; Kenny 1981, 481). The Dorobo adopted the Maasai language, initiation ceremonies, ornaments and dress, and gave their wives to Maasai husbands, so that in appearance, they are nowadays difficult to distinguish from Maasai (Kioko 2016; Kratz 1980).

Cooperation between these groups not only revolved around social and economic ties, but was also a response to natural disasters like droughts and diseases. The rinderpest epidemic of the 1890s (Waller, this volume) forced erstwhile herders to work (mostly temporarily) on Kikuyu farms, while some were absorbed into the Kikuyu households, but such adaptive ties did not stop the occurrences and continuation of inter-group raids (Berman and Lonsdale 1992, 27; cf. Waller, this volume). Inter-group ties between Kikuyu, Maasai and

Dorobo may also be seen during and after the “great migration” – following the removal of northern Maasai from Laikipia between 1904 and 1911 (Hughes 2006). The Maasai moved with “their Kikuyu” and arrived at the southern reserve which at the time was already occupied by Purko and Loita Maasai in large numbers, as well as by groups of Kaputiei, Sigirari, Matapato, Lo’ Dogolani and Kak-o-Nyuki (Keekonyokie) (Spear and Waller 1993).

Dorobo welcomed northern Maasai and Kikuyu who arrived in Enoosupukia and its environs. These groups continued to admit new Kikuyu arrivals from central Kenya, some of whom were fleeing from white settlers following the Mau Mau uprising of the 1950s, while some were in search of settlement and farmland following British occupation of their regions (Anderson 2005, 21). Kikuyu often received land in return for labour or through intermarriages between their daughters and Maasai and Dorobo men (Blackburn 1996; Klopp 2001; Matter 2010; Waller 1993).

The post-colonial period has seen increasing numbers of land-seeking individuals and groups in Enoosupukia, some of whom come from the nerve centre after failing to get jobs in the flower farms or for purposes of diversifying their livelihoods owing to low wages and unpredictable working conditions at the agro-industrial hub (Kioko 2016). The influx of farmers and consequent agricultural intensification on former pastoral and hunting grounds led to disputes between Maasai, Dorobo, and Kikuyu regarding access to and control over resources, particularly in the postcolonial period (Kioko 2016, 80–84).

Nowadays, in the hills and plains adjoining the Naivasha basin, agropastoralism has progressively replaced specialised pastoralism and hunting, which were the main economic activities in the early twentieth century. Today, Maasai and Dorobo also cultivate, just like their Kikuyu neighbours (see Figure 11.2). Many, however, rent out their land to Kikuyu and other migrant tenants. According to Matter (2010, 253) and a number of elders we interviewed, Dorobo took up small-scale farming and usually hold a small number of cattle as well, as they were barred from hunting since the colonial period. Due to changes in land-use patterns, hunting and gathering practices are no longer tenable; only a handful of Dorobo families have one or two bee hives today (Kioko 2016). All communities also practice a mixture of off-farm activities, such as petit commerce, butchering, or transport.

The history of relations between Maa speakers and Kikuyu is summarised succinctly by one of the author’s research participants:

The Maasai [referring to Maa-speakers] and Kikuyu are one large ‘family’ and the conflicts between them can be taken as any normal conflicts in a family setting, except that politics knocks the heads of two brothers

against each other, as it was in 1993. The survival of one group is largely dependent on the other.⁵

3.2 *The Agricultural Frontier in Maiella and Enoosupukia*

Enoosupukia is characterised by good agricultural soils and abundant rainfall, which allows for up to three harvests per year for some staples including vegetables: Irish potatoes (locally known as *shangi*), onions, cabbages, carrots, various types of leafy vegetables, and legumes such as beans and peas (*Pisum sativum*) (see Figure 11.2). According to the 2019 census, Enoosupukia Location hosts 20,961 residents with a density of 96 people per km², whereas Maiella Location hosts 14,646 inhabitants, with a density of 112 people per km², and Maiella trading centre with a density of 138 per km² (KNBS 2019, 164, 169).

As the study area is in close proximity to Lake Naivasha's agro-industrial hub, this hub provides a ready market for food produce from Enoosupukia and Maiella. This booming market for food produce has progressively drawn large numbers of youth (between 20 and 40 years of age) into commercial cultivation through leasehold arrangements in Enoosupukia and its environs. Apart from Naivasha, other markets for food produce have progressively opened up, including Nairobi, Machakos, and Mombasa, among other towns in Kenya. Some produce also crosses into Kampala, Uganda (Kioko 2016, 46).



FIGURE 11.2 A small-scale farm in Enoosupukia hills
PHOTO: MARIE MÜLLER-KONÉ 2018

5 Interview with Shushu/elderly woman, Maiella trading centre, August 21, 2013.

This influence of developments in the Naivasha basin in the hinterlands at the Nakuru/Narok border had set in early in the twentieth century, when Naivasha's settler economy reached up to Maiella. The area known as Maiella today, bordering Enoosupukia, was until 1964 a settler farm (Maiella Estate) constituting some 16,338 acres of land. According to residents, an Italian commercial farmer who acquired the estate from a British settler gave it its name (Kioko 2016, 43).⁶ He had developed a pyrethrum plantation in Maiella, which was a lucrative business in the Naivasha area in the colonial period (Kuiper 2017, 56–64), employing Kikuyu squatters on his farm. Since then, the development of agricultural activities has spread further, into Enoosupukia. The agricultural frontier was hence initiated by frontier entrepreneurs from the Naivasha area, which mobilised additional frontier entrepreneurs who ventured further into the perceived “empty” land. We thus observe a cascading influence of developments in the Naivasha basin on the agricultural frontier at the Nakuru/Narok boundary.

Enoosupukia is part of the Melili forest, which is part of the greater Mau Forest Complex. As late as 1962, Enoosupukia, with a few other forested areas in Narok District, were among the only forests in the entire country not yet officially reserved for protection (note by J.P.W. Logie and W.G. Dyson in their report “Forestry in Kenya: A Historical Account of the Development of Forest Management in the Colony” in the 1962 issue of *Colony and Protectorate of Kenya* [quoted in Matter 2010, 214]). Attempts by the colonial administration to put Enoosupukia under the authority of the Forest Department failed due to resistance by the Maasai Native Council, who wanted to keep the forests under their control (Matter 2010, 217).

As Maiella was bordering the fertile Enoosupukia area, Maiella Estate became an ideal entry point connecting land-seeking clients from the Lake Naivasha area and persons from other parts of Kenya, to land opportunities in Enoosupukia and other parts of Narok. This process had started already in colonial times through intergroup land transfers (Klopp 2001, 151), when Dorobo and Maasai transferred rights of access to land through sale and/or exchange in the form of gifts to “newcomers”, mostly of Kikuyu descent. These early transfers of rights to land were informal and involved word of mouth or, in only a few instances, hand-written agreements as evidence of transfer (e.g. Kioko 2016, 246). The agreements increasingly grew into monetary transactions over the decades.⁷

Land transfers in Enoosupukia increased after the many Kikuyu labourers on Maiella Estate managed to buy the land from the Italian settler around

6 Rhodes House, Oxford/ Handing Over Report/Mr. A.D. Galton-Fenzi to Mr. R.A. Jeary/Narok District/1st March 1957.

7 Interview with elderly Kikuyu woman, Maiella, 4 June 2019.

the time of independence in 1963, by forming a cooperative called the Ng'ati Farmers Cooperative Society Limited and by mobilising their relatives from the Kikuyu heartland in Central Kenya to join the cooperative and offer financial support. They obtained a title deed for the farm in July 1974 (Kioko 2016, 97). The Maasai, who claimed this as their ancestral land, were not successful in regaining possession of Maiella Estate at that moment (Matter 2010, 133), which led to disputed claims between the two groups as discussed later on.

The state of Enoosupukia as a forest, a hunting ground, pastureland, or as agricultural land remains contested not only between residents but also between these communities and the state. While acknowledging the water-catchment function of forests in Narok in the execution of the 1972 Narok District Development Plan, E.C. Trump highlighted the agricultural potential of the area in a report for the FAO entitled "Vegetation and Land Use Survey of Narok District": "The Narok forested and ex-forested areas contain the only undeveloped arable lands remaining in Kenya (apart from areas in other districts where irrigation will be required)" (quoted in Matter 2010, 219). Consequently, the Development Plan designated the larger proportion of the Melili forest (including Enoosupukia) for mixed farming, officially opening up an agricultural frontier characterised by uncertainty over titling and conflicts over use of, access to and control of land.

In 1977, an adjudication section was declared in one part of the Enoosupukia area called Kipise Section. The whole of Enoosupukia, however, was unofficially divided into individual land holdings. In the 1970s and 1980s the process of land acquisition by Kikuyu and other migrant farmers accelerated. The terms and legitimacy of such agreements are largely disputed today. Kikuyu and Maa-speakers disagree on whether these transactions constituted permanent or temporary transfers of rights, and whether the transferred rights indicated use rights only, or actually meant a full transfer of ownership rights (Matter 2010, 138–221; Kioko 2016, 95–102). In addition, the registration process of the land adjudication was only completed officially in October 2007, leaving those in possession of allotment letters in a legal limbo for decades. During the 60-day objection period, more than 1,000 complaints were filed, compared with 1,850 parcels listed in the register. Many complaints related to contested transactions between Maa-speakers and Kikuyu (Kioko 2016; Matter 2010, 146). As titles can only be issued when all disputes on a parcel are settled, the first titles for Kipise Section were only issued from 2013 onwards.⁸

8 Interviews with displaced Kikuyu in Maiella, September 2018, June 2019. In interviews with Dorobo elders in Sintakara, March 2019, it was suspected that this was due to the death in 2016 of Maasai leader William Ole Ntimama, who had tried to prevent Kikuyu from getting land titles.

Consequently, in the last four decades, rapid agricultural intensification in Enoosupukia through land transfers and later leasehold arrangements between Maa-speaking landowners and land-seeking clients has changed and shaped the landscape enormously. The result is the massive conversion of the Enoosupukia forest through market-oriented cultivation. While Enoosupukia was still largely forested at the time of independence, the forest cover nowadays is so much reduced that the green meadow hills of Enoosupukia do not even fulfil the ecological definition of a forest by the FAO of an area with canopy cover of over 10 percent (Matter 2010, 233).

In the following section, we zoom in on the contested land transfers mainly to Kikuyu migrants and ensuing violent conflict in the early 1990s which drastically disrupted food supply and movement between the nerve centre and the frontier.

3.3 *Violent Conflict in Enoosupukia Since the Early 1990s*

Beginning in early 1993, some political figures and administrators in Narok made moves to evict highland residents by reclassifying Enoosupukia as a forest, although parts of the Maasai elite and officials in Narok District had participated in the extra-legal land market in Enoosupukia (Kioko 2016; Matter 2010, 221). Central to this endeavour of gazetting Enoosupukia as a forest, and particularly getting rid of the Kikuyu population in the area, was the Maasai area Member of Parliament, William Ole Ntimama. Ntimama used the deforestation narrative, blaming forest destruction on the Kikuyu during public meetings and arguing that their farming tendencies had contributed to reduced water and interfered with dry-season grazing areas. In addition, the potential legal ownership of large parts of Enoosupukia by Kikuyu reduced the opportunities for the Maasai political elite to let non-local Maasai political cronies exploit the resources of the area. Hence, Ntimama and the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, John Sambu, called upon the Narok District Council to declare Enoosupukia (outside the adjudication area Kipise Section) a District Forest, which the Council did in September 1993. The political background to that move was that multi-party elections in 1992 challenged the decade-long rule of the governing KANU party.

The conversion of Enoosupukia into a protected forest had been prepared in meetings with KANU followers in the course of 1991. As a severe drought hit the lowland areas at the same time as the declaration of Enoosupukia as a forest, by mid-October 1993, Maasai pastoralists from the lowlands coming to graze and Kikuyu residents in Enoosupukia had started to clash (Matter 2010, 223–32). In October 1993, an organised group of Maasai warriors descended upon and attacked Kikuyu farmers and their Maa-speaking affiliates (Dorobo and members of the Maasai group sympathetic to the

Kikuyu) in Enoosupukia. Thousands of Kikuyu and their affiliates were forcefully moved from Enoosupukia, while close to 50 people (both Maasai and Kikuyu) lost their lives (Hornsby 2012, 548; Kioko 2016, 105; Klopp 2001, 163; Matter 2010).

Although Enoosupukia officially became a County Council forest, the exact size and boundaries of the forest are still not clearly determined. The forest status continues to be contested by Enoosupukia residents who had unofficially demarcated their individual plots in the forest in the 1970s. After the 1993 clashes, many Maasai and Dorobo residents thus remained in Enoosupukia, both in the Kipise adjudication area and in the designated forest area. In 2005, the Narok District government once again decided to dispel people from the area, this time the Dorobo and Maasai people inhabiting the area that was now officially a forest. With just a few days' notice, people were brutally evicted from the forest area by several security agencies. On the evening of February 28, 2005, up to 400 soldiers – a combined force made up of Narok County Council forest and game rangers, Administration Police, and members of the paramilitary GSU – drove residents out, systematically setting fire to fields of maize and potatoes and demolishing houses. The media reported 1,200 displaced residents and 210 houses destroyed (Matter 2010, 236–37). In interviews of the first author, some former evictees remembered brute violence by some security forces, including rape.⁹ The violence cut transport links between the nerve centre in Naivasha and the frontier, making movement and supply of food produce impossible.

Instrumental in the government's decision on the evictions were Kenyan state and non-state environmental groups with international support – including branches of the IUCN, the FAO, DFID, UNDP, and UNEP. The Kenya Forests Working Group (KFWG) had promoted sustainable forest management across the county since 1995 and lobbied the government intensively in the months preceding the eviction (Matter 2010, 239–40). Eviction and resettlement have characterised the social order to date as disgruntled farmers and pastoralists continue to push for their rights to portions (and sometimes the whole) of Enoosupukia forest, which will be elaborated below.

The agricultural frontier in Enoosupukia displays characteristics that are foregrounded in the literature but is also more complex. As highlighted by the frontier literature, the Kikuyu farmers who ventured into Enoosupukia with state support after independence, reinforced by the declaration of an adjudication section, were accused of environmental degradation and displaced by

⁹ Interviews with Enoosupukia residents, March–July 2019.

sections of the state apparatus in the 1990s. Some of these frontier entrepreneurs, however, had started making contacts and acquiring tracts of land from Dorobo and Maasai long before state institutions were established. As Dorobo and Maasai had started ceding land to Kikuyu outsiders before the state officially encouraged migrant farmers to cultivate the area, it is not straightforward to call this process of land transfers a process of dispossession. While the acquisition of land by European settlers in the Naivasha and Maiella area clearly dispossessed Maasai pastoralists and Dorobo hunters of grazing and hunting grounds, the story of Enoosupukia is more complicated. Here, the process more resembles an "indigenous frontier" (Li 2014), where local inhabitants join in the process of land-use transformation, as more and more Dorobo and Maasai turned to agricultural activities as well.

The land-tenure regime was only half-heartedly transformed by state institutions: a process of land titling was started but left dragging on for decades, so that extra-legal land transfers continued unabated, with parts of the political elite joining in. When the area was finally declared a state forest, the rehabilitation and protection of the area was also not effectively enforced by state institutions. Legal uncertainty thus remains a central characteristic of the frontier space that suits certain state actors, who are able to manipulate the issue of land access for their own political ends.

In what follows, we show how individuals and groups on the frontier navigate a post-conflict situation, conflicting claims, and uncertainties over land use and ownership.

4 The Post-Conflict Situation: Cross-Cutting Ties through Intermarriages and Leasehold Arrangements

Despite those discursive positionings that run along ethnic divides, an ethnographic study by Kioko (2016) in Maiella and Enoosupukia shows that in their everyday lives, cross-cutting ties are forged between the Kikuyu and Maa-speakers. Indeed, ties and networks which the two groups had formed and sustained before the violence in 1993 were instrumental in their return to peace and the post-conflict reconstruction including repossession of lands. Ties are nurtured through intermarriages and livestock (and other) economic transactions, as well as leasehold arrangements between Maa-speaking landowners and Kikuyu land-seeking clients.

Based on a 2014 survey (Kioko 2016), a sample of 140 marriages documented for Maiella and Enoosupukia recorded 48 (34%) intermarriages between Maa-sai and Kikuyu. Out of the 48 intermarriages recorded, about 13 occurred prior

to the 1980s. Since the late 1980s intermarriages have increased, with Maasai men habitually marrying Kikuyu wives, following the rules of exogamy in which Maasai men often marry Kikuyu neighbours with whom they have constant interaction in the shared frontier. A considerable number of children result from these intermarriages. It is these children who embody the conflicting loyalties of their parents and kin. In situations of violence (such as was the case in October 1993), it is the actors who have ties with both conflicting groups that will first and foremost engage themselves in peaceful intercommunity relations.

Among the Maa-speakers and Kikuyu of Maiella and Enoosupukia, relationships which result from cross-cutting ties are often accompanied by significant material transfers and engagements, thereby fostering and giving meaning to concepts of sharing and interdependence (see Kioko and Bollig 2015), eventually developing into allegiances or conflicting loyalties. According to Kioko (2016) intermarriage unites in-laws and their larger social networks of both Kikuyu and Maasai kin and friends. In-law bonds facilitate peaceful relations between the families tied in kinship, but may also influence their friends and neighbours in a similar direction. Through in-law relations, the wider network of friends gains opportunities to negotiate for access rights to land. In-laws and their close core of friends receive land as gifts and/or through purchase, constituting a reciprocal social relationship where each party is indebted to the other – usually, an exchange of daughters for land. Unlike their Kikuyu neighbours, Maasai put forward a strong myth-based reason against marrying members groups such as the Luo, whom they accuse as not favouring circumcision of their sons, an important rite of passage among the pastoral Maasai. The myth is so strong that Maasai women married into the Luo community are considered outcasts by their own families.

Intermarriage between Maa-speakers and Kikuyu plays a crucial role in the context of access to land and settlement. Possible disputes over land thus become a family matter rather than a cause of disagreement between ethnic groups. This makes disputes easier to manage and averts instances of large-scale rivalry. As noted by Flap (1997, 209), persons that find themselves in situations of conflicting loyalties frequently and for long periods will gradually develop strong self-discipline and tolerance. Apart from access rights to land, intermarriage strengthens personal security, involves a wide range of socially meaningful material flows, and grows economically meaningful ties.

Apart from intermarriage, land rentals or leasehold arrangements between the two groups constitute a vital aspect of cooperation. Land rentals mainly from Maa-speaking landowners to Kikuyu land-seeking clients are accompanied by a multitude of interactions, negotiations and friendships, and they

also build trust between those involved, and thus reinforce the economic value of the land. Landowners habitually transfer user rights to land-seeking clients and retain rights of disposal. Land rentals or leasehold arrangements are founded on trust between actors irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds. Strategies for maintaining trust and friendship involve presenting gifts to landowners (such as shoes, foodstuffs, blankets, and mobile phone airtime, etc.), inviting them to social events and ceremonies (e.g. circumcision parties, marriage and church meetings), chatting (physically or via WhatsApp), adhering to the agreed payment models and honouring debts. Some tenants help landowners with menial tasks in their farms or at their homesteads. Interestingly, some tenants also give or sell crop residue to landowners for their herds to eat, thereby cementing their arrangement. Notably, negotiations over access to land and the ensuing transfer of user rights from Maa-speaking landowners to mainly Kikuyu tenants make land a shared resource despite the existence of interpersonal land-related claims and disputes.

Despite the role of cross-cutting ties and conflicting loyalties in nurturing a cohesive social fabric and promoting non-violent behaviour, land claims still persist at both individual and group levels on the frontier. In the following, we describe the role of the state and elites in the present claims.

5 Present Land Claims: a Class and State-Community Struggle

While land has become a shared resource, it remains contested. Though crucial in redefining social relationships and access to land between diverse ethnic groups, the existence of ties and networks between families and friends does not put an end to historical land claims. The only difference is that these ties and networks facilitate a conducive environment for peaceful negotiations at individual and group levels while limiting the outbreak of violence.

Nevertheless, our analysis reveals that recent land claims often run along the lines of class and state-community opposition. This section looks at three cases of recent land claims in Maiella and Enosupukia. First, in the Maiella Estate, intra-community wrangles about the distribution of land of the Ng'ati farm dominate, and especially take a new turn following expansion of geothermal exploration in the Naivasha area, on the lands adjacent to Olkaria including parts of the Maiella Estate (precisely, Narasha).¹⁰ Second, in Enosupukia, the Maa-speaking population of Enosupukia forest that was evicted from the

¹⁰ See also Nweke-Eze and Adongo (this volume).

official forest area in 2005 contests the status of Enoosupukia as a protected forest and their own dispossession related to it in a state-community conflict. They have continuously challenged state institutions over the forced evictions and insist on compensation either monetarily or through allocation of other land, claims that are based on their loss of settlement and landholdings for a rehabilitation exercise. Thirdly, the attempts to retrieve land in Enoosupukia by some Kikuyu currently located in Maiella, who were displaced by the 1993 violence,¹¹ can equally be seen through the lens of state-community struggles: the Narok Lands Office irregularly allocated many of the plots in favour of Maa-speaking individuals. Both the dispossessed Kikuyu and displaced Maa-speakers from Enoosupukia forest are confronted with the shadows of past violence and injustice done to them, along with continuing injustices. At stake in all cases is the question of who has the authority to determine the status of land tenure, and on what grounds.

Class relations play an important part in present land claims on the Ng'ati estate in Maiella. A lot of disputes on Ng'ati land arose among Kikuyu themselves after conflicts with neighbouring Maasai were resolved in court by attributing 4,207 acres of the Ng'ati Estate to the Maasai community in 1996 (Republic of Kenya 2019, ix). The 581 Ng'ati members who bought the land from the settler in 1964 had initially received 2.5 acres each, and would subsequently get an allocation of 5.5 acres when the first part of the land was subdivided in 1994. This accounted to roughly 60% of the total Ng'ati Estate, and it meant that land parcels progressively became too small to be economically viable once parents subdivided and passed them on to their children and grandchildren or subdivided them for sale following increasing numbers of land-seeking members of Kikuyu immigrants.¹² Hence, many Kikuyu in Maiella have small landholdings which are not sufficient for market-based farming and hence some seek out rental land elsewhere, in Enoosupukia or in Nkampani, the Maasai area of Ng'ati estate.

The management of Ng'ati estate introduced social differences among the Maiella residents because only original members were able to receive plots in the first subdivision process. Those who arrived in Maiella after the foundation

11 See Section 11.3.2 on the filing of over a thousand complaints in Narok courts after the registration of land titles in Kipise in 2007. The post-conflict situation saw many Kikuyu reclaim land in Enoosupukia in front of Narok courts. The struggle to reclaim lands that by now have fallen on the hands of the younger Maasai generation, who sometimes do not respect old land-transfer agreements between their parents and Kikuyu friends or relatives, is still ongoing to date, especially in cases where the individuals involved in the early transactions are either dead or very old, to confirm these claims.

12 Interviews with Chief and Assistant Chief of Maiella, May and September 2018, and members of Ng'ati farmers association, May, September 2018, June 2019.

of the Ng'ati cooperative, among them the many displaced Kikuyu families from Enoosupukia, depended on Ng'ati members to lease or sell them land. Tensions rose during the second phase of subdivision that started in 2009 in other parts of the estate, when the Ng'ati management allocated the best land to themselves and to some government officials (Republic of Kenya 2019, x, 21–24), and irregularly increased the Ng'ati members from the initial 581 to 2,000. In addition, in 2014, the Ng'ati management sold some 3,093 acres of the 16,338 acres to Kenya's largest energy regulator, KenGen, for the extension of geothermal development close to Lake Naivasha at Narasha/Olkaria area (OrPower4), without consulting its members.¹³ During this period, meetings of the assembly of the Ng'ati society were impeded by the administration on security grounds (Republic of Kenya 2019, 15–17). The sale sparked massive intra-communal conflict, which escalated to the burning of homes belonging to some managers of the estate, while a number of managers and their acquaintances were violently evicted from Maiella in 2014 (Kioko 2016, 261–67). A new management committee was formed, which is still in dispute in court with the former management. The government even called in a Commission in 2018 to resolve the dispute (Republic of Kenya 2019).¹⁴

While geothermal-related land struggles continue to characterise the Maiella Estate, Enoosupukia has witnessed conservation-related struggles over land at least since 2005. After the 2005 eviction from Enoosupukia forest, evictees sent delegations to Narok officials, including Ntimama, to reverse the eviction decision. Through years of lobbying, they finally succeeded in having a settlement scheme agreed for them called Sintakara settlement (Matter 2010). The settlement scheme was surveyed, parcel owners identified by a Land Committee set up in 2009 and title deeds issued for the residents in 2011. However, legal uncertainty remains for the Sintakara settlement, as the current Narok County government disputes the legality of the settlement and upholds that it is in the confines of the official county forest.¹⁵ Some influential non-local Maasai managed to receive parcels of land in the scheme, and long-term Enoosupukia residents suffered substantial losses in terms of landholdings.¹⁶

While the county government had declared Enoosupukia a forest in 1993, it did not take the necessary measures to rehabilitate and protect the forest.

13 For details of the transaction, the money given to some members as returns from the sale and the aftermath of the conflict see Kioko (2016, 261–67).

14 Interviews with Chief and Assistant Chief of Maiella, May and September 2018, and members of Ng'ati farmers association, May, September 2018, June 2019.

15 Interviews with county government official, Nairobi, 26 April 2019, and former surveyor, telephone, 12 April 2019.

16 Interviews with Sintakara residents, March–July 2019, April–May 2020.



FIGURE 11.3 Remains of tree plantations by the Green Belt Movement in Enoosupukia
PHOTO: MARIE MÜLLER-KONÉ 2019

Since the 2000s, the prestigious Green Belt Movement, an NGO linked to Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, led efforts to rehabilitate the forest, although the area still presents a picture of a “forest with no trees”¹⁷ as shown in Figure 11.3.¹⁸ Moreover, Enoosupukia residents were never consulted on the rehabilitation exercise, but were merely hired as paid labour force, receiving KSh 500 (roughly \$5) a day.¹⁹ The state-led violence they endured during the 2005 eviction and the loss of their habitat and landholdings for a rehabilitation exercise that they are not involved in are clearly associated with a feeling of alienation, or even asphyxiation, as this quote from an interview with a Dorobo elder in Sintakara (March 2019) illustrates: “What we were given is just a rope around our neck”.

Consequently, residents of Sintakara settlement adjacent to the protected areas still reclaim the forest. While some residents referred to Enoosupukia forest as a protected forest, many referred to it as community land, as the vignettes below show:

-
- 17 The state recently contracted Principles for Trees, an NGO, to rehabilitate the forest with indigenous Dombeya trees among others, which seems to fare better.
- 18 Interviews with community members and state authorities (county government, Water Towers Agency, National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA), Narok (Deputy and) County Commissioner, Kenya Forest Service, county rangers), March–July 2019.
- 19 Interviews with elders in Sintakara settlement, March–April 2019. At January 1, 2019, KSh 1 was equivalent to \$0,0097 (source for the exchange rate: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/>).

Enoosupukia was our reserve; it was not a forest as designated by the state now:

ELDERLY MAASAI RESIDENT, SINTAKARA SETTLEMENT, MARCH 2019

Enoosupukia is not a state forest. We were alienated, because it was our land.

ELDERLY MAASAI RESIDENT, SINTAKARA SETTLEMENT, MARCH 2019

To justify their claims, some Maa-speakers have settled close to the forest, even though the state allocated them land elsewhere in neighbouring Sakutiek and Moi Ndabi, which they consider less suitable for agriculture due to the relatively hot and dry periods experienced in the lowlands of Naivasha compared to Enoosupukia. Some Enoosupukia residents imagine claiming back the land of Enoosupukia forest as community land: "We're hopeful that God will bring change and throw out the government".²⁰

When asked about the future of inter-group relations, residents of the Sintakara settlement express a certain unease with recently arrived communities, stating: "We lived harmoniously but now there is problem with new tribes", "I am not used to the new communities compared to the old ones", or "Now we have new neighbours unlike there before".²¹ However, looking more closely, it becomes apparent that the Sintakara residents not only refer to migrant communities, like the Kikuyu, but also to other Maa-speaking people who have come to the area more recently. Statements like "I have no option since they are also allocated land just as I am", or "I just accept them, for they are also members"²² must refer to non-local Maasai who have been allocated plots in the new Sintakara settlement scheme, due to their good political connections or corruption rather than by virtue of ancestry in the place (cf. Matter 2010). Thus, behind the expression of unease about newcomers may lie a hidden critique of state agents who have taken advantage of the new settlement scheme to irregularly settle some of their clients.

In addition to land struggles surrounding Maiella Estate and conservation in Enoosupukia, community-state relations are also at stake in land claims that find their way to the Narok Land Office. Encouraged by a nation-wide land-titling programme initiated by President Kenyatta in 2013, some Maiella

20 Elderly Dorobo woman, Sintakara settlement, March 2019.

21 Interviews in Sintakara settlement, April–May 2019.

22 Interviews in Sintakara settlement, April–May 2019.

residents began to pursue previously acquired lands in Enoosupukia and which they allegedly lost in the 1993 violence. They attempted both formal and informal avenues, going through the Chiefs, the Narok Lands Office, District Officers, Courts, and engaging local peace committees and dialoguing with the current occupants. Many of the Kikuyu interviewed were not successful in retrieving the land in Enoosupukia, but a few were. In the two successful cases, the former landowner, who had sold the land, had testified against a new occupant in court in one case, and in the other case, the occupant could not provide sufficient evidence to prove the land was his. The neighbours in Enoosupukia who know the Kikuyu claimants from before the 1993 violence are reported to have a welcoming attitude towards the Kikuyu claimants, some even supporting their claims to parcels of land they lost during the 1993 violence (Kioko 2016).²³

The reasons why many Kikuyu had difficulties reclaiming land is that some descendants of previous landowners who had ceded the land to the Kikuyu do not recognise the land transaction, or that current, sometimes recent occupants refuse to leave the premises or have rented it to other tenants. When Kikuyu claimed such parcels at the Narok land office, they often found that the parcel was already registered in the name of somebody else through fraudulent transactions involving the Land Officers. When inquiring further, the Kikuyu claimants learnt that the minutes on their files stated that they had failed to appear thrice before the authorities – without them having been summoned at all. In addition to this recurrent vice, recent occupants tend to be well connected to influential Maasai figures as a Kikuyu testified: “These Maasais have paid him a lot of money and some have given him cows and goats or sheep so that he can testify lies against us”.²⁴

These different land claims and contestations all indicate an underlying tension arising from power differences, which leave many of the frontier's residents in a weak position in the face of well-connected individuals and society managers who use fraudulent means to allocate and/or sell individual or communally-claimed parcels of land for selfish gains.

The clamour for title deeds has intensified as both Maa-speakers and Kikuyu seek to secure their holdings. Evidently, confirmation of rights to land through individual title deeds gives one the confidence to invest in market-oriented food production and hopefully to escape future property-related disturbances to livelihoods and settlement. Such confidence is necessary to ensure continued supply of food produce to the fast-growing populations of the nerve centre

23 Interviews with Kikuyu claimants, Maiella, September 2018, June 2019, July 2020.

24 Interview with displaced Kikuyu claimant, Maiella, June 2019.

in Naivasha and beyond the local markets. We argue that negotiations and contestations surrounding the use and ownership of land in the agricultural frontier on the fringes of Lake Naivasha is strongly motivated by rising demand for farm produce at the nerve centre.

6 Discussion and Conclusion: Centre-Periphery Relationship and the Future of the Lake Naivasha Basin

What is the role of the nerve centre (Lake Naivasha) in all these dynamics? How does the nerve centre influence the growth of agricultural frontiers on the fringes of the land? How does the nerve centre and its emerging influence on mobility and commercial exploitation of the frontier zone affect intergroup relationships outside of the lake? How do different ethnic groups control their respective futures either violently or through non-violent cooperative strategies? The discussion here centres on the role of the nerve centre as a catalyst for change in the margins, as well as the interdependence of the nerve centre and the periphery (frontier relations, economy, and the linked role of state).

The nerve centre – represented by Lake Naivasha and its immediate surroundings including the town and the agro-industrial hub – provides a market for the agricultural produce coming from the frontier in Enoosupukia and Maiella, including meat and farm produce. In terms of other business-related transactions, the centre supplies goods in wholesale for the frontier consumers, e.g. sugar, cooking oil etc. In addition, as exposed in the literature on frontiers, the Lake Naivasha region provided the impetus for migrants to settle at the frontier, starting with entrepreneurs, who in addition to converting formerly hunting and grazing fields into large-scale plantations and livestock-production areas, began to bring squatters to work on those farms. The squatters would eventually purchase the settler estate, which heralded the arrival of more local farmers. To date, the nerve centre continues to be a sending area for people seeking to diversify into farming, those who do not get jobs in the floriculture sector, and those who lead precarious lifestyles due to low wages and seasonal employment at the flower farms.

Land claims and contestations form part of the social order on the frontiers. Respective groups negotiate access to land from different angles. Many Kikuyu argue they had bought land in Enoosupukia, whereas Dorobo and Maasai claim to have birth rights to the place. While the latter still accommodate Kikuyu as land leasers in Enoosupukia, it seems there is no going back to the situation pre-1993 clashes, where both lived together in Enoosupukia, under evolving

terms and conditions. The 1993 violence that pitted Kikuyu and Maa-speaking people against each other is thus still permeating intergroup relations and circumscribing aspirations for a common future, as captured in this statement: "I can't live with people with whom we have ever quarrelled over land. Those people are not happy for me to get my land back. What if someone comes to kill me overnight?"²⁵

Despite such attitudes from some individuals, ethnic relations seem to grow stronger, as evidenced by widespread social and economic cross-cutting ties including intermarriage, livestock trade, and leasehold arrangements. Moreover, cooperation and non-violent conflict resolution between groups is evidenced in the fact that there has not been a repeat of interethnic land-related violence since 1993, but only intracommunal attacks directed by Kikuyu against an elite perceived to be corrupt – the Ng'ati farm directors – rather than ethnic "Others". Further, behind the unease by Enoosupukia residents about newcomers lies a hidden critique of powerful Maasai outsiders – not Kikuyu.

Land claims remain one of the greatest challenges on the frontier. We, however, see a shift from violent regulation over claims towards a cooperative approach in pursuit of property rights to land. Using their marginalised position brought about by state actors and corrupt elite, a majority of residents in Maiella and Enoosupukia are united through collective action to push for formal title deeds with the hope of securing their futures and, as elsewhere, to avoid being expropriated by the state and its allies (Toulmin, Delville, and Traoré 2002, 4). Surprisingly, even title deeds are not secure in the end. State institutions intervene to territorialise the frontier at certain moments in time – through land adjudication and titling or the gazetting of forests – but they do so half-heartedly and thus leave the frontier in a state of legal uncertainty.

In conclusion, we observe the following: the current demands for food produce at the nerve centre coupled with agricultural intensification at the frontier suggests possibilities for deepened exchanges of people, goods and services between the lake and the hinterlands. Increasing populations at the nerve centre coupled with few and unpredictable job opportunities in the flower sector (as demonstrated by the closure of farms and termination of contracts for many flower workers during the COVID-19 pandemic) suggests a possibility for pursuit of alternative livelihoods elsewhere and the frontier thus becomes an immediate option. Ongoing land claims and the uncertainty over tenure paints a grim picture of the future of the frontier and the nerve centre. While cross-cutting ties and conflicting loyalties give hope for a peaceful future on

25 Maiella resident who had successfully recuperated land in Enoosupukia, September 2020.

the frontier, interpersonal and intergroup ties can easily become fragile and collapse or break down, thus explaining conflict or violence (e.g. Fukui 1994; Schlee 1997). However, we understand peace not simply as the absence of violence, but as the capacity for and practice of non-violent cooperation in the face of pertinent challenges (Kioko 2016, 38). Therefore, the future of the frontier and the nerve centre as well as their interdependence will largely depend on their capacity to deal with existing challenges.

Acknowledgements

This chapter is the result of research done in the context of the DFG-funded Collaborative Research Centre *Future Rural Africa: Future-Making and Social-Ecological Transformation*. We thank our research participants in Kenya as well as all the persons and institutions that facilitated our research for their time, efforts and support. In particular, we are grateful to the tremendous work done by our research assistant Sarah Njeri (Soila) and other assistants who prefer not to be mentioned by name. Without their invaluable contributions this work would not have been possible.

References

- Anderson, David. 2005. *Histories of the Hanged: British Dirty War in Kenya and the End of the Empire*. London: Phoenix Orion Books Ltd.
- Baretta, Silvio D., and John Markoff. 1978. "Civilization and Barbarism. Cattle Frontiers in Latin America." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (4): 587–620.
- Berman, Bruce, and John Lonsdale. 1992. *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*. Book one: State and Class. Athens: Eastern African Studies, Ohio: Ohio University Press, London: James Currey, Nairobi: Heinemann.
- Berntsen, John L. 1976. "The Maasai and Their Neighbors: Variables of Interaction." *African Economic History* 2: 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3601509>.
- Blackburn, Roderic H. 1982. "In the Land of Milk and Honey: Okiek Adaptations to their Forests and Neighbours." In *Politics and History in Band Societies*, edited by Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee, 283–305. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blackburn, Roderic H. 1996. "Fission, Fusion, and Foragers in East Africa: Micro- and Macroprocesses of Diversity and Integration among Okiek Groups." In *Cultural Diversity among Twentieth-century Foragers: An African Perspective*, edited by Susan Kent, 188–212. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colson, Elizabeth. 1953. "Social Control and Vengeance in Plateau Tonga Society." *Africa* 23 (3): 199–212. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1156280>.

- Cronk, Lee. 2004. *From Mukogodo to Maasai. Ethnicity and Cultural Change in Kenya*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Dundas, Kenneth R. 1908. "Notes on the Origin and History of the Kikuyu and Dorobo Tribes." *Man* 8: 136–39.
- Flap, Henk D. 1997. "The Conflicting Loyalties Theory." *L'Année sociologique* 47 (1): 183–215.
- Fukui, Katsuyoshi. 1994. "Conflict and Ethnic Interaction: The Mela and their Neighbours." In *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, edited by Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis, 33–47. London: James Currey.
- Galaty, John. 1993. "'The Eye That Wants a Person, Where Can it Not See?' Inclusion, Exclusion, and Boundary Shifters in Maasai Identity." In *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa*, edited by Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, 174–94. London: James Currey.
- Geiger, Danilo. 2008. *Frontier Encounters: Indigenous Communities and Settlers in Asia and Latin America*. Bern: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.
- Guyot, Sylvain. 2011. "The Eco-Frontier Paradigm: Rethinking the Links between Space, Nature and Politics." *Geopolitics* 16 (3): 675–706. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2010.538878>.
- Hall, Derek. 2013. *Land*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hoefle, Scott W. 2006. "Twisting the Knife. Frontier Violence in the Central Amazon of Brazil." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 33 (3): 445–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150601062993>.
- Hoffmann, Kasper, and Penelope Anthias. 2021. "The Making of Ethnic Territories: Governmentality and Counter-conducts." *Geoforum* 119: 218–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.06.027>.
- Hornsby, Charles. 2012. *Kenya: A History since Independence*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.
- Hughes, Lotte. 2006. *Moving the Maasai: A Colonial Misadventure*. St Antony's Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Imamura, Masao. 2015. "Rethinking Frontier and Frontier Studies." *Political Geography* 45: 96–97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.09.014>.
- Kenny, Michael G. 1981. "Mirror in the Forest. The Dorobo Hunter–gatherers as an Image of the Other." *Africa* 51 (1): 477–95. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1158950>.
- Kioko, Eric M. 2016. "Turning Conflict into Coexistence: Cross-cutting Ties and Institutions in the Agro-pastoral Borderlands of Lake Naivasha Basin, Kenya." PhD diss., University of Cologne.
- Kioko, Eric M., and Michael Bollig. 2015. "Cross-cutting Ties and Coexistence: Inter-marriage, Land Rentals and Changing Land Use Patterns among Maasai and Kikuyu of Maiella and Enoosupukia, Lake Naivasha Basin, Kenya." *Rural Landscapes: Society, Environment, History* 2 (1): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.16993/rl.ad>.

- Klopp, Jacqueline M. 2001. "Electoral Despotism in Kenya: Land, Patronage and Resistance in the Multi-Party Context." PhD diss., McGill University.
- Korf, Benedikt, Tobias Hagmann, and Martin Doevenspeck. 2013. "Geographies of Violence and Sovereignty: The African Frontier Revisited." In *Violence on the Margins. States, Conflict, and Borderlands*, edited by Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers, 29–54. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kratz, Corinne A. 1980. "Are the Okiek Really Masai? Or Kipsigis? Or Kikuyu?" *Cahiers d'études africaines* 20 (79): 355–68.
- Kröger, Markus, and Anja Nygren. 2020. "Shifting Frontier Dynamics in Latin America." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 20 (3): 364–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12354>.
- Kuiper, Gerda. 2017. "The Flowers Are Carrying Us. Agro-industrial Labour and Migrant Workers' Settlements at Lake Naivasha, Kenya." PhD diss., University of Cologne.
- Larsen, Peter B. 2015. *Post-frontier Resource Governance: Indigenous Rights, Extraction and Conservation in the Peruvian Amazon*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lawren, William L. 1968. "Masai and Kikuyu: An Historical Analysis of Culture Transmission." *Journal of African History* 9 (4): 571–83. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S00218537000904X>.
- Leakey, Louis S.B. 2007 [1977]. *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903. Volume I*. Kenya: Richard Leakey.
- Li, Tania M. 2014. *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Little, Paul E. 2001. *Amazonia: Territorial Struggles on Perennial Frontiers*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Matter, Scott. 2004. "We Have This Land as Our Right': Ethnicity, Politics, and Land Rights Conflict at Enoosupukia, Kenya." MA thesis, McGill University.
- Matter, Scott E. 2010. "Struggles over Belonging: Insecurity, Inequality and the Cultural Politics of Property at Enoosupukia, Kenya." PhD diss., McGill University.
- Muriuki, Godfrey. 1974. *A History of the Kikuyu 1500–1900*. Oxford University Press.
- Nelson, Robert L. 2011. "Emptiness in the Colonial Gaze: Labor, Property, and Nature." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 79 (1): 161–74. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0147547910000335>.
- Radcliffe, Sarah A. 2019. "Geography and Indigeneity III: Co-articulation of Colonialism and Capitalism in Indigeneity's Economies." *Progress in Human Geography* 44 (2): 374–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519827387>.
- Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred D., and Daryll Forde. 1950. *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Rasmussen, Mattias B., Christian Lund. 2018. "Reconfiguring Frontier Spaces: The Territorialization of Resource Control." *World Development* 101: 388–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.01.018>.

- Reid, Richard. 2011. *Frontiers of Violence in North-East Africa. Genealogies of Conflict since c. 1800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- KNBS. 2019. *Kenya Population and Housing Census, Volume 11: Distribution of Population by Administrative Unit*. Nairobi: KNBS.
- Republic of Kenya. 2019. *Report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Ng'ati Farm Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)*.
- Schetter, Conrad, and Marie Müller-Koné. 2021. "Frontiers' Violence: The Interplay of State of Exception, Frontier Habitus, and Organized Violence." *Political Geography* 87: 102370.
- Schetter, Conrad, and Marie Müller-Koné. 2021. "Frontier – ein Gegenbegriff zur Grenze?" In *Handbuch Grenzforschung*, edited by Dominik Gerst, Maria Klessmann, and Hannes Krämer, 240–54. Baden-Baden: NOMOS Verlag.
- Schlee, Günther. 1997. "Cross-cutting Ties and Interethnic Conflict: The Example of Gabbra, Oromo and Rendille." In *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, edited by Wolde Gossa Tadessa, Katsuyoshi Fukui, Eisei Kurimoto and Masayoshi Shigeta, 577–96. Kyoto: Shokado.
- Schmink, Marianne, and Charles H. Wood. 1992. *Contested Frontiers in Amazonia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schmitt, Carl. 1997 [1950]. *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum*. Berlin: Dunker & Humboldt.
- Spear, Thomas, and Richard Waller. 1993. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Tignor, Robert L. 1976. *Colonial Transformation of Kenya: The Kamba, Kikuyu, and Maasai from 1900–1939*. Princeton University Press.
- Toulmin, Camilla, Philippe L. Delville, and Samba Traoré. 2002. "Introduction." In *The Dynamics of Resource Tenure in West Africa*, edited by Camilla Toulmin, Philippe L. Delville, and Samba Traoré, 1–24. Oxford: James Currey.
- Tsing, Anna L. 2003. "Natural Resources and Capitalist Frontiers." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38 (48): 5100–106.
- Turner, Frederick J. 1893. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Waller, Richard. 1993. "Acceptees and Aliens: Kikuyu Settlement in Maasailand." In *Being Maasai: Identity and Ethnicity in East Africa*, edited by Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, 226–48. Oxford: James Currey.
- Werthmann, Katja, and Thilo Grätz. 2012. *Mining Frontiers: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*. Mainzer Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung 32. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.